**Crisis Invention Questions**

***Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?***

* What prompted the client to seek help now?
* What happened to cause this crisis?
* How is the client trying to solve the crisis?  What is working?  What is not working?
* How was the client behaving before the crisis?
* How is the client behaving now?
* Has anything like this happened to the client before?  How was it handled?
* What is the client’s history of handling other crises?  What was successful?  What was not successful?
* What are the client’s psychological strengths?
* What are the client’s environmental strengths?
* What does the client see as the two or three most important problems to be worked on immediately?
* How much immediate success is the client likely to have in these or other problem areas?
* How life threatening is this situation? Immediately?  In the near future?
* What things are likely to stand in the way of successful crisis resolution?
* What is the client’s mental status?
* ***In addition to perception and situational support, a third key factor that can affect client equilibrium is* the client’s coping mechanisms.**
* *Client’s Strengths? Environmental Strengths?*

*Coping Mechanisms*

* *Responding NOT Reacting*
* *Decision Making Skills/Consider options*
* *What has worked in past? What hasn’t?*
* *Triggers that resort to poor coping mechanisms*
* *Access Strengths*
* *Develop plans of action*

*Family Sessions*

*Treatment Planning*

***Define Problem***

***Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?***

***(Acute, Chronic Crisis)***

***Identify Solvable problems/ Coping Skills***

***Develop Goals***

***Interventions Employed to accomplish goals***

***Stabilize Environment***

***Resources community referral***

***Risk Assessment***

***History of violence***

***Past instances***

**The 8 Elements of Crisis Intervention**

**Education.** There is a natural ability within  most people to recover from a crisis provided they have the support, guidance and resources they need. The very heart of crisis intervention is to face the impact of a crisis. In most cases, a crisis involves normal reactions, which are understandable, to an abnormal situation. An effective crisis counseling provides information, activities and structure that will help us recover and move past the crisis. More importantly, crisis counseling will insure that you do not prolong a crisis and it will help insure you do not create more problems in your life and the lives of others. Confrontation through information and discussion may be an important part of crisis intervention.

**Observation and awareness.** A crisis in our life can be the result of low self-awareness or not recognizing the impact our behavior has on others as well as the impact it has on our self. Increasing your awareness can lead to choices that promote recovery and wellness. You can't help yourself if you cannot see the problem and how you may be contributing to the crisis. In some cases, family dynamics and communication problems within families can prolong a crisis.

**Discovering and using our potential.** Every crisis represents an opportunity for personal growth and to discover our highest potential and true self.  The greatest hero in any crisis is the person who does not believe he or she is a hero, but is never-the-less prepared for the challenge by the undiscovered qualities and abilities that are only discovered when we are facing tragedy and the "inevitables" of life. While support is important, this does not mean that the person in crisis should not be allowed, encouraged and sometimes required to make decisions and take action to resolve the crisis and improve the quality of their life.

**Understanding our problems.** It is the fundamental intention of all people to do the best they can with the resources and abilities they have during a crisis. During any crisis, it is important to recognize or discover our true and deepest intention. You must keep your intentions in mind no matter what you do or how unskillfully you may act. While our intent is usually to make life better, our behavior can be misguided, misunderstood and less effective than we would hope. Self-understanding as well as understanding how others may keep us "stuck" are important keys to recovery.

**Creating necessary structure.** The most important aspect of crisis intervention and counseling is to provide a social "container" for our experience that will allow us to express, explore, examine and become active in ways that help insure the crisis is not prolonged. For each of us, there are necessary activities and routines in our life during times of distress that provide comfort and support. These do not include alcohol, medications or other drugs. Medications should only be used to prevent a physical or psychological breakdown. The purpose, duration, frequency and potential impacts of medications must be defined in order to make informed decisions.

**Challenging irrational beliefs and unrealistic expectations.** Few people, during times of crisis, have the necessary skills to fully examine what they are thinking, what they assume and what they expect from their self and from others. Our thoughts, especially the ones we don't look at, contribute a great deal to how we feel and what we do next in response to our feelings.

**Breaking vicious cycles and addictive behavior.** Many crises are the result of vicious cycles or addictions. For example, drug and alcohol use can not only destroy our life, but it will confuse how we actually feel about our self, others and the world around us. One cannot know how they feel and what they truly want if their feelings are modified by chemicals, medications, alcohol and other drugs. A painful crisis can lead a person to avoid and escape how they feel. Unhealthy escape and avoidance of emotional pain and distress may involve the use of medication, drugs, alcohol, sex, thrill seeking, parties or working excessively. Taking the role of a "victim" can cause others to rescue a person in crisis. Prolonging the crisis by refusal to deal with a crisis can create supportive relationships. When a person becomes dependent on others and "escapes" to feel better, a vicious cycle can develop. Vicious cycles start with behaviors that are intended to avoid or escape emotional pain, but ultimately these avoidance and escape behaviors create more problems or the same problem we are trying to avoid. The behaviors found in a vicious cycle can actually prolong a crisis.

**Create temporary dependencies.** During a crisis, it is often helpful to form brief relationships with others in order to gain support. Crisis counseling and intervention are very helpful and necessary.  A healthy dependency is usually temporary and will always lead to increasing independency. Unhealthy dependencies are long term and create increasing dependency rather than independency.

**Facing fear and emotional pain.** A crisis is usually a time of fear or sadness. How we respond is important. There is "monster" in the world for every person who "runs" in response to their fear or sadness.  When we face the darkness in our life, and we are not destroyed by our fears, or sadness, we eventually discover there are no monsters. We discover that  we can survive. In time we discover that our pain will fade. Facing emotional pain is the most healthy response. This does not mean we should make our self miserable. But we should not expend a great deal of energy and become involved in activities that help us avoid how we feel and what we think. When people suffer, it is important to help them feel less alone in the world. It is important to help people in crisis solve the problems in their life. People in emotional pain need to be empowered and supported.